

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Board of Regents  
**From:** Board Office  
**Subject:** Discontinuation of the Specialist Degree Program in School Psychology  
Iowa State University  
**Date:** December 4, 2000

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Approve the discontinuation of the School Psychology program.
2. The University should be reminded that Board policy requires Board approval to discontinue or significantly reduce enrollment in a program.

**Executive Summary:**

Iowa State University is requesting the discontinuation of the Specialist Degree in School Psychology as recommended by external reviewers. It appears that no new students have been admitted in recent years. Currently there are no active students in the Specialist Degree School Psychology program. The discontinuation of this program will allow the limited departmental resources to be utilized more efficiently in the doctoral studies program. The program is so small that its discontinuation will have no significant impact on the college or University.

It appears from the report on this request for discontinuation that enrollment in this program may have been discontinued without Board approval. The institution is reminded of Board policy, *Regents Procedural Guide* §6.20, requiring approval before discontinuing enrollments.

Attached is the proposal for discontinuance.

  
Robert J. Barak  
*djh*

Approved:   
Frank J. Stork

**PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE  
THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY SPECIALIST DEGREE PROGRAM**

1. **Name of originating department:** Department of Psychology
2. **Name of the program:** Specialist Degree School Psychology Program
3. **Name of administering department:** Department of Psychology
4. **Rationale for discontinuation:**

The Department of Psychology proposes that the specialist degree program in school psychology be eliminated.

The department's rationale for discontinuing this program is multilayered. Central in the rationale is the department's effort to optimally use its limited faculty resources to achieve its goal of becoming a top psychology department. A 1997 external review team noted that a department of our size could not adequately support five graduate programs and continue to progress toward becoming a top psychology department. The review team specifically recommended that the department eliminate the school psychology program by moving those students over to our more established program in counseling psychology. Within 9 months following that review, three faculty members resigned, including our only two school psychologists. With that development, it would have required that the department ignore the advice of the external review team and build a school psychology program from scratch, which would require hiring at least two and possibly three school psychologists, in order to preserve the school psychology program. Given the recommendations of the external review team, the absence of school psychologists on the faculty, and the lack of progress toward achieving accreditation of the school psychology specialization from the American Psychological Association, the department decided that the faculty resources previously associated with school psychology could be better utilized by our more established areas of doctoral study.

Issues related to this decision were fully discussed in the department's Graduate Program Committee, Executive Committee, and full faculty before bringing the matter to a vote. The faculty voted convincingly to discontinue the school psychology program on April 8, 1998. This vote was taken with the stipulation that existing students would be accommodated and permitted to obtain their degrees.

5. **Availability of other programs in other Regent's institutions:**

Doctoral study in school psychology is offered at the University of Iowa, and a master's degree program is offered at the University of Northern Iowa.

6. **Enrollment data for current and previous four years.**

As indicated in the table below, no new students have been admitted to the specialist degree program in school psychology since 1997. Currently, there are no active students in the school psychology specialist degree program. All but two students admitted to this program since 1987

have completed the program and been awarded a specialist degree in school psychology. The two exceptions are Heather Mack and Melissa Lange. Heather completed all M.S. requirements and received that degree and then withdrew from the specialist degree program. Melissa Lange transferred to our doctoral program in counseling psychology.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Admitted Name</u> | <u>Current Status</u>                                      |
|-------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1988        | Ward, Susan          | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1990        | Jordison, Time       | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1990        | Upah, Kristi         | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1991        | Volmer, Lorna        | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1993        | Lund, Andrea         | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1994        | Slavens, Stacy       | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1994        | Kurth, Jeremy        | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1995        | Hayes, Karen         | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1995        | Mack, Heather        | Completed M.S. degree and withdrew from specialist program |
| 1996        | Lange, Melissa       | Transferred to Counseling Ph.D. program                    |
| 1997        | Johnston, Monica     | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1997        | Mowatt, Samantha     | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1997        | Oien, Catherine      | Completed specialist program                               |
| 1997        | Williams, Jennifer   | Completed specialist program                               |

**7. Relationship of the proposed discontinuation to the strategic plans of the department, the college, and the university.**

As indicated above, the proposed discontinuation was recommended by an external review team and is entirely consistent with the department's strategic plan. Department resources will be utilized more efficiently by focusing them in our better-established areas of doctoral studies (cognitive, counseling and social psychology). The school psychology program was so small that it is unlikely that its discontinuation would have any impact on college or university strategic planning.

**8a. Survey of students in the program to determine the impact of the discontinuation on their academic plans.**

The Department Chair and Director of Graduate Education met with the school psychology students in group and individual meetings three years ago. In addition, the Chair met on several occasions with Dan Reschly, former director of the school psychology program. The purpose of these meetings was to assess the needs of students and determine what support they would need to receive their intended degree. Currently, all students in this program have either completed the program and received the degree, transferred to another program, or withdrawn.

**8b. Projection of faculty and staff needed to accommodate student needs in order to maintain program quality, and both a time frame for, and the costs of, program phase-out.**

The specialist degree program has been successfully phased out over the past three years, so no faculty or staff are required to accommodate students' needs -- all students have completed all curricular requirements for the degree.

**8c. Description of the amount of money, if any, that would become available for redirection under the institution's strategic plan as a result of the discontinuation of the program.**

There are no fiscal resources specifically tied to the school psychology program. The two faculty lines historically associated with school psychology will be reassigned to well-established areas of doctoral studies in counseling psychology, cognitive psychology, and social psychology.

**8d. Description of the impact of the discontinuation on other programs offered by and the overall mission of the institution.**

Given the very small size of this program, it is unlikely that its discontinuation will have any significant impact on other programs or the mission of the institution.

**8e. Description of the impact on minorities or women.**

Discontinuation of the program should have no appreciable impact on women or minorities. The program had basically the same distribution of women and minorities as other programs in the department. The representation of women was slightly higher than in other programs, but women are already overrepresented in those programs (about 65%). Furthermore, the program provides general education in school psychology; it does not have a specific training focus on working with female or minority populations.

**8f. Description of the potential faculty and staff reductions or reassignments that would result from the discontinuation.**

The two faculty lines historically associated with the school psychology program will be reassigned to well-established areas of doctoral studies in counseling psychology, cognitive psychology, and social psychology.

**8g. Description of how existing facilities and equipment freed by the discontinuation would be utilized.**

Two observation rooms were assigned to the school psychology program, though the program underutilized these rooms. The rooms have been updated and assigned to our APA accredited program in counseling psychology. The school and counseling psychology programs shared some psychological testing equipment that has now reverted to the counseling psychology program.